

JIMMY YANCEY

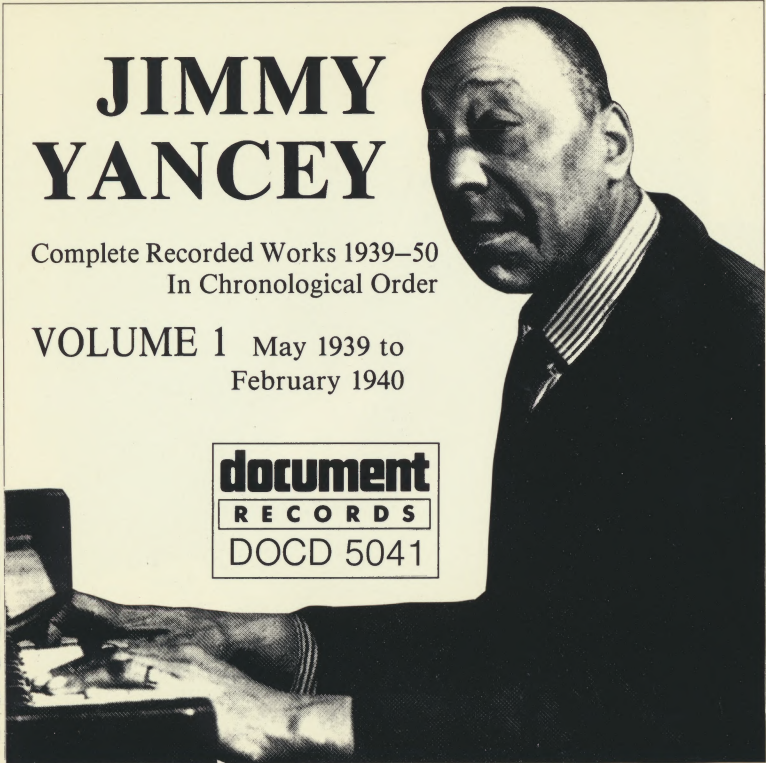
Complete Recorded Works 1939–50
In Chronological Order

VOLUME 1 May 1939 to
February 1940

document

RECORDS

DOCD 5041



DOCD-5041

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RECORDS

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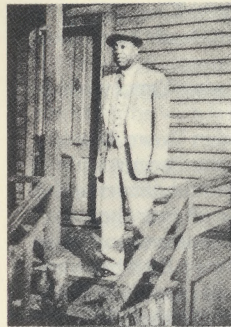
JIMMY YANCEY

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VOLUME 1 (May 1939 to February 1940)

1. Jimmy's Stuff (Jimmy's Stuff No. 2)
2. The Fives
3. La Salle Street Breakdown
4. Two O'Clock Blues
5. Janie's Joys
6. Lean Bacon
7. Big Bear Train
8. Lucille's Lament
9. Beezum Blues
10. Yancey Limited
11. Rolling The Stone
12. Steady Rock Blues
13. P.L.K. Special
14. South Side Stuff
15. Yancey's Getaway
16. How Long Blues
17. How Long Blues No. 2
18. Yancey Stomp
19. State Street Special
20. Tell 'Em About Me
21. Five O'Clock Blues
22. Slow And Easy Blues
23. The Mellow Blues
24. I Received A Letter (Faber Smith, vcl.)
25. East St. Louis Blues (Faber Smith, vcl.)



Jimmy Yancey and his sisters



Jimmy Yancey in front
of his home, 1939



Jimmy Yancey relaxing at home with his family

“Veteran . . . Jim Yancey, whose dancing thrilled the King and Queen of England in 1913, still is active. Jim taught Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons some of his tricks, but went unrecorded until a few months ago when Solo Art waxed his blues. Today Yancey is a groundskeeper for the Sox.”

Jimmy Yancey was 41 years old when these lines appeared in *Down Beat* in October, 1939. Born in Chicago on February 20, 1898, he had begun to perform as a child, not playing piano but acting as a singer and dancer at the Pekin Theatre in Chicago and in road shows that travelled all over the country. A vaudeville show had finally brought him to Europe on a tour that culminated in the command performance mentioned by *Down Beat* but went as far as Vienna and Budapest. After his retirement from vaudeville in 1915, Yancey had taught himself the piano with some help by his brother Alonzo and had acquired his legendary reputation as a pianist and entertainer at rent parties, club dances and similar events on Chicago's South Side. Besides that, he had been one of the workers at Comiskey Park, where the White Sox baseball club was located, for many years.

By the end of the thirties, however, this was the only base of his living and he was not really “active” as a performer any more. When he was asked to record for Solo Art, he had to practise before he felt able to comply. 17 takes were made, but only Jimmy's Stuff and The Fives (not related to the famous train piece) could be issued before the Solo Art label ran out of money. The rest remained untitled and unreleased until after Jimmy's death, when Riverside put them out on LPs.

Of those posthumous releases, Janie's Joys, Yancey Limited, P.L.K. Special and Yancey's Getaway were variants of The Fives whereas Steady Rock Blues and Lucille's Lament, Jimmy's prototype of what was later recorded as Sweet Patootie but also as The Mellow Blues and under other titles, were related to Jimmy's Stuff. Lean Bacon and Rolling The Stone (recorded as State Street Special for Victor), La Salle Street Breakdown and Beezum Blues

(recorded as Old Quaker Blues for Vocalion), Two O'Clock Blues and Big Bear Train (used in Bluebird's Cryin' In My Sleep) and, of course, the two takes of How Long Blues were variants of the same tunes. With the exception of How Long Blues, the titles chosen by Riverside camouflaged this and all connections with later recordings. A Jimmy's Stuff No. 2 was also invented when Riverside reissued what was in fact the original take.

If Solo Art had not been quite successful in that respect, it was through his first recordings for Victor that Yancey gained the large audience and some of the recognition he would have deserved much earlier. Yancey was a retired barrelhouse player and his style was archaic and, in a way, anachronistic at the time of his first recordings. But with the boogie wave sweeping the country, Yancey Special being a hit and that story of Ammons and Lewis being his pupils, it cannot surprise that he was now approached by a big record company. He responded with what are regarded as some of his best achievements as far as piano technique and a dynamic performance are concerned. Yancey Stomp, State Street Special and The Mellow Blues were re-recordings of Solo Art material but the other three tunes were new. The six sides were released as an album entirely dedicated to Yancey and with an analytical essay by William Russel, both an unusual honour at that time. The album was not yet on the market when Yancey was recorded again, this time by Vocalion, in February 1940. On two titles, he accompanied vocals that were released as by Faber Smith. Some have suggested that this was a pseudonym for Yancey, partly because of the identity of the lyrics in I Received A Letter and Yancey's Death Letter Blues, which differ from those of other singers. The voice, however, is clearly not the same and according to blues historian Karl Gert zur Heide, Faber Smith was a well-known South Side character. The Vocalion session ended with two instrumentals, Bear Trap Blues and Old Quaker Blues, which are reissued on DOCD-5042. Both were new versions of titles that had been recorded by Solo Art.

Konrad Nowakowski

DOCD-Series: Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order

- 5001 TOMMY JOHNSON (1928—1929)
- 5002 SON HOUSE & The Great Delta Blues Singers (1928—1930) Son House, Willie Brown, Kid Bailey, Garfield Akers, Joe Calicott, Jim Thompkins, Blind Joe (Willie) Reynolds, Rube Lacy
- 5003 THE GREATEST SONGSTERS (1927—1929) Richard "Rabbit" Brown, Mississippi John Hurt, Hambone Willie Newbern
- 5004 FURRY LEWIS (1927—1929)
- 5005 SKIP JAMES (1931)
- 5006 BLIND WILLIE McTELL — Vol. 1 (1927—1931)
- 5007 BLIND WILLIE McTELL — Vol. 2 (1931—1933)
- 5008 BLIND WILLIE McTELL — Vol. 3 (1933—1935)
- 5009 CHARLEY PATTON — Vol. 1 (1929)
- 5010 CHARLEY PATTON — Vol. 2 (1929)
- 5011 CHARLEY PATTON — Vol. 3 (1929—1934)
- 5012 STOKES & SANE — THE BEALE STREET SHEIKS (1927—1929)
- 5013 FRANK STOKES (1928—1929)
- 5014 MEMPHIS BLUES (1928—1935) Robert Wilkins, Tom Dickson, Allen Shaw
- 5015 SLEEPY JOHN ESTES — Vol. 1 (1929—1937)
- 5016 SLEEPY JOHN ESTES — Vol. 2 (1937—1941)
- 5017 BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON — Vol. 1 (1925—1926)
- 5018 BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON — Vol. 2 (1927)
- 5019 BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON — Vol. 3 (1928)
- 5020 BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON — Vol. 4 (1929)
- 5021 MEMPHIS JUG BAND — Vol. 1 (1927—1928)
- 5022 MEMPHIS JUG BAND — Vol. 2 (1928—1929)
- 5023 MEMPHIS JUG BAND — Vol. 3 (1930)
- 5024 BLIND BLAKE — Vol. 1 (1926—1927)
- 5025 BLIND BLAKE — Vol. 2 (1927—1928)
- 5026 BLIND BLAKE — Vol. 3 (1928—1929)
- 5027 BLIND BLAKE — Vol. 4 (1929—1932)
- 5028 MEMPHIS MINNIE & KANSAS JOE — Vol. 1 (1929—1930)
- 5029 MEMPHIS MINNIE & KANSAS JOE — Vol. 2 (1930—1931)
- 5030 MEMPHIS MINNIE & KANSAS JOE — Vol. 3 (1931—1932)
- 5031 MEMPHIS MINNIE & KANSAS JOE — Vol. 4 (1932—1934)
- 5032 GUS CANNON — Vol. 1 (1927—1928)
- 5033 GUS CANNON & NOAH LEWIS — Vol. 2 (1929—1930)
- 5034 SAM COLLINS (1927—1931) inc. John D. Fox
- 5035 WILLIAM HARRIS — BUDDY BOY HAWKINS (1927—1929)
- 5036 BACKWOODS BLUES (1926—1935) Sam Butler (Bo Weavil Jackson), Bobby Grant, King Solomon Hill, Lane Hardin
- 5037 KOKOMO ARNOLD — Vol. 1 (1930—1935)
- 5038 KOKOMO ARNOLD — Vol. 2 (1935—1936)
- 5039 KOKOMO ARNOLD — Vol. 3 (1936—1937)
- 5040 KOKOMO ARNOLD — Vol. 4 (1937—1938)
- 5041 JIMMY YANCEY — Vol. 1 (1939—1940)
- 5042 JIMMY YANCEY — Vol. 2 (1940—1943)
- 5043 JIMMY YANCEY — Vol. 3 (1943—1950)
- 5044 THE TWO POOR BOYS (Joe Evans & Arthur McClain) (1927—1931)
- 5045 THE SONGSTER TRADITION (1927—1929) Papa Harvey Hull & "Long Cleve" Reed, Big Boy Cleveland, William & Versey Smith, Luke Jordan, Eli Frammer
- 5046 BARBECUE BOB — Vol. 1 (1927—1928)
- 5047 BARBECUE BOB — Vol. 2 (1928—1929)
- 5048 BARBECUE BOB — Vol. 3 (1929—1930)
- 5049 ISHMAN BRACEY & CHARLEY TAYLOR (1928—1929)
- 5050 BIG BILL BROONZY — Vol. 1 (1927—1930)

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Jimmy Yancey at Chicago Tavern, 1940s

1. Jimmy's Stuff (Jimmy's Stuff No. 2)	R-2417-SA 12008	(A)	3:17
2. The Fives	R-2418-SA 12008	(A)	3:07
3. La Salle Street Breakdown	SA unissued	(A)	3:08
4. Two O'Clock Blues	SA unissued	(A)	2:59
5. Janie's Joys	SA unissued	(A)	2:58
6. Lean Bacon	SA unissued	(A)	3:07
7. Big Bear Train	SA unissued	(A)	3:08
8. Lucille's Lament	SA unissued	(A)	3:08
9. Beezum Blues	SA unissued	(A)	3:17
10. Yancey Limited	SA unissued	(A)	3:01
11. Rolling The Stone	SA unissued	(A)	2:40
12. Steady Rock Blues	SA unissued	(A)	2:57
13. P.L.K. Special	SA unissued	(A)	3:06
14. South Side Stuff	SA unissued	(A)	3:07
15. Yancey's Getaway	SA unissued	(A)	3:07
16. How Long Blues	SA unissued	(A)	3:01
17. How Long Blues No. 2	SA unissued	(A)	3:04
18. Yancey Stomp	044006-1-Vi 26589	(B)	2:46
19. State Street Special	044007-1-Vi 26589	(B)	2:38
20. Tell 'Em About Me	044008-1-Vi 26590	(B)	2:43
21. Five O'Clock Blues	044009-1-Vi 26590	(B)	2:40
22. Slow And Easy Blues	044010-1-Vi 26591	(B)	2:33
23. The Mellow Blues	044011-1-Vi 26591	(B)	2:39
24. I Received A Letter	WC-2955-A-Vo 05464	(C)	2:34
25. East St. Louis Blues	WC-2956-A-Vo 05464	(C)	2:45

PERSONNEL:

- A: Jimmy Yancey, pno solo. _____ Chicago, 4 May 1939
 B: Jimmy Yancey, pno solo. _____ Chicago, 25 October 1939
 C: Faber Smith, vcl; acc. Jimmy Yancey, pno. _____ Chicago, 23 February 1940

NOTE: This is the first of 3 volumes.

Special thanks to Dani Gugolz, Hans Maitner, Konrad Nowakowski for their invaluable help!

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VOLUME 1 (May 1939 to February 1940)

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

AUSTRO
MECHANA

A A D



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DOCD-5041